

VZCZCXRO6777
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #2320/01 2081012
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 261012Z JUL 08
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8501
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002320

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/22/2018

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SUBJECT: IRAQ APPROVES A NEW DPM AND NINE MINISTERS: A
FRESH START FOR THE GOI

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor Brian Shukan for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d)

¶1. (C/NF) Summary/Comment. The Council of Representatives (CoR) approved a new Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and nine ministers on July 19 in a strong step towards national reconciliation. This approval came after months of tumultuous negotiations between Prime Minister Maliki and VP Tariq al-Hashimi. Four of the Shia ministers were reportedly selected by Prime Minister Maliki and are part of the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), but considered to be technocrats and independents. The Tawafuq bloc ministers and DPM are largely from the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP), but include two from the Iraq National Dialogue Conference (INDC). The new DPM Rafi Issawi (IIP) and Dr. Abid Thyab al-Ajeeli (IIP) are familiar faces in the Government of Iraq (GOI) cabinet, but the others are fairly new to the national political scene. The technical expertise of these ministers will likely provide more capable leadership in the GOI and provide PM Maliki a fresh start as the GOI tackles difficult challenges in the months ahead. End Summary/Comment.

SHIA MINISTERS

¶2. (C/NF) Reportedly, PM Maliki selected the four Shia ministers presented to the CoR for approval. While generally affiliated with the United Iraqi Alliance, they are largely independent and technocrats in their fields with years of experience to contribute to their new ministerial posts. A summary of their background follows:

-Amir Abd al-Jabar Isma'el - Minister of Transportation: Amir served as the General Director of the Liquid Petroleum Gas Bottling Company for the Ministry of Oil prior to his appointment. He has a strong engineering background, including a Bachelor of Science degree in Marine/Naval Engineering from the Arabian Gulf Academy of Marine Studies in 1986, and expertise in the jurisdiction of the maritime transport of oil and gas goods. His family strongly opposed Saddam Hussein's regime and he participated in the 1991 Shia uprising. He was subsequently detained at Radhwaniyyah prison. After his release, he sought political asylum in Syria and was active in the media, working with opposition newspapers to Saddam's regime. He was born in 1962 in Basrah.

-Qahtan Abbas Nu'man al-Jiburi - Minister of State for Tourism and Antiquity: Qahtan served as a Professor in the Science Department of al-Kufa University prior to his ministerial appointment. He has three physics degrees (Doctorate, University of Mustansariyah; Master's, Babil University; and Bachelor's Degree, University of Baghdad). Other positions previously held at al-Kufa University include Head of the Physics Department, Assistant Dean for Administrative Affairs, and Director of the Advisory Office in the Science Department. He was also a Scientific Advisor for the Civil Administration in Najaf in 2004. He is a member of the Teacher's Union and Mathematics/Physics

Association and currently serves as the General Secretary for the al-Jabour Tribe in Iraq. Qahtan was born in Babil in 1964.

-Khulud Sami Azzara al-Majun - Minister of State for Provincial Affairs: Khulud is a former university professor at King Saud University (Saudi Arabia) for Administrative Sciences. Her family opposed Saddam's regime and her father was subsequently detained in prison, along with other relatives. The family later left Iraq in 1970 to Beirut, Cairo and then Saudi Arabia. When her family returned to Iraq, her father served as a member of the Transitional National Assembly (2005-2006), but failed to win a seat in the CoR. She has a Doctorate in Criminal Law/Rights, a Masters in Law from Cairo, and a Bachelor's of Law from Baghdad University. She was born in 1950 in Samawah and is married with three children (two girls, one boy). She speaks English.

-Thamir Jafar al-Zubaydi - Minister of State for Civil Society Affairs: Thamir has a background as a professor/teacher of statistics, largely at technical institutes and colleges in Iraq (Karbala, Baquba). He holds a Doctorate in Statistics (Baghdad University), and a Master's and Bachelor's Degree in Statistics (Mustansariyyah University). He has published numerous studies on the cost and quality of education, academic achievement, population growth, and the delivery of bank transactions in Rafidain Bank. He is married and was born in 1957 in Diyala.

DPM AND SUNNI MINISTERS

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13. (C/NF) One of the biggest steps towards national reconciliation this year included the return of the Tawafuq bloc to the GOI. The Tawafuq bloc withdrew in early August 2007 and the agreement on its return occurred after numerous months of negotiations and false starts between PM Maliki and VP Tariq al-Hashimi. The majority of the Tawafuq ministers, including the DPM, are from the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP), but two are from the Iraqi National Dialogue Council (INDC). Both parties fought internally for a long period during the negotiations over which party would receive the DPM position. The background of the DPM and ministers follows:

-Rafi Hiyad al-Issawi - Deputy Prime Minister (IIP) - Issawi is familiar on the political scene and served as the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs before Tawafuq withdrew from the GOI. During the past year, he played an active role in Anbar Province, negotiating a power-sharing arrangement between IIP and tribal members of the Sahawa al Iraq (SAI) movement in the Anbar Provincial Council. He is a doctor by training. Issawi was born in Anbar/Fallujah in 1966 and speaks English fluently.

-Dr. Abid Thyab al-Ajeeli - Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research (IIP): Ajeeli was Minister of Higher Education and Research prior to the Sunni boycott, but advised the ministry "remotely" during this period. He has a Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Keele (UK), a Master's of Science in Operational Research from the University of Southampton (UK), and Bachelor's of Science in Computers from the University of London/Queen Mary College. He previously taught at various universities in Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan, and the United Kingdom. Ajeeli is an active member of the New York Academy of Sciences and a member of the Arab Administrative Development Organization. He is married and speaks English fluently.

-Mahir Dalli Ibrahim al-Hadithi - Minister of Culture (INDC): Mahir's past experience includes serving as a Dean and Professor at Anbar University. He specialized in Modern Arabic Literature and also taught Modern Literature at Kufa University. Mahir was also a linguistic expert at the

Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. Mahir has a Doctorate in Modern Arabic Literature from Baghdad University. He is married and was born in 1952 in Haditha.

-Farouq Abdul Qadar Abdul Rahman - Minister of Communications (IIP): Rahman previously worked in Prime Minister Maliki's Office as an advisor on reconstruction and service issues. Prior to that, he worked in multiple positions, including as a Director General (DG), at the Ministry of Construction and Housing. His other experience includes serving as a member of the Ninewa Provincial Council and Chairman of its Investment Committee, and numerous other appointments in Northern Iraq (Kirkuk, Mosul) implementing road and bridge projects. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Mosul. He has a reputation as a good engineer and project manager, and has received many awards. Contacts among the predominantly Shi'a staff at the Ministry of Communications (MoC) have expressed guarded optimism that Rahman will serve the MoC well. He is married, was born in 1947, and speaks English.

-Dr. Muhammad Munajid Eifan al-Duleimi - Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (INDC): Duleimi was previously a Professor at Baghdad University College of Administration and Economy, in the Statistics Department. He also taught at universities in Algeria and Jordan. He has a Doctorate in Statistics, and a master's and Bachelor's in the same field. He was born in 1951 and is married with three boys.

-Dr. Nawal Majid Hamed al-Sammarie - Minister of State for Women's Affairs (IIP): Dr. Nawal is currently a member of the CoR and a member of the Health and Environment Committee. Her other experience includes serving as a physician in Ninewa and Karkh Maternity Hospital. She is a member of the Union of Physicians, Association of the Muslim Family, and the Iraqi Parliamentary Union. She is married with five children and was born in Samarra in 1962.

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